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RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001059

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: OTHER DONORS CAUTIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING
MISUNDERSTANDINGS

REF: HRARE 1018

Classified By: DCM: Kathy Dhanani. Rason: 1.4 d

¶1. (C) On November 26 USAID hosted a meeting with Ambassador, Ambassadors from the UK Australia, the EU, Sweden and the Netherlands as well as aid agency chiefs from Canada and the U, to discuss addressing misunderstandings among political leaders and SADC negotiators about donor conditions for reengagement with the GOZ (Reftel).

¶2. (C) Those present generally agreed that, while the international community may not be confident the SADC process will succeed in changing conditions on the ground in Zimbabwe, it is incumbent on us to publicly express support as long as the process is moving forward. Participants in the meeting did not feel that a public statement of our principles for reengagement (as agreed to in London and reconfirmed in the Hague) would be useful; the Australian Ambassador said Canberra felt such a statement would give Mugabe an opportunity to further scapegoat the international community. However, all agreed that, as discussed in the Hague, it is appropriate for donors to use our agreed principles as the basis for our discussions with interlocutors in Zimbabwe and beyond. While some participants believed the South Africans were well aware that international assistance will not automatically flow following an MDC-ZANU PF agreement, all thought it might be useful for missions in Pretoria to engage on this point with the SAG.

¶3. (C) UK Ambassador Andrew Pocock offered a concise analysis of the current situation and a recommendation for donor response. He noted that the GOZ/ZANU is using three strategies to try to burnish its image. The first seeks to show that ZANU PF is fully cooperating in the SADC mediation process to satisfy critics of democratic practices in Zimbabwe. The second is a drumbeat of official statements characterizing the crisis in Zimbabwe as an economic problem (caused by sanctions) rather than a political crisis. The third is to deny that there is undue violence in Zimbabwe.

Pocock suggested that donors stress in their discussions that improved governance/respect for human rights/democratic elections/enhanced humanitarian access and economic stabilization are indivisible. He believed that SADC governments need to hear from us that the crisis in Zimbabwe is not just about economics. He said he understood his government had used the Kampala Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting to offer to support a SADC-led effort to ensure that electoral reforms are implemented, that the playing field is leveled and that 2008 elections in Zimbabwe are free and fair.

14. (C) Comment: Post is disappointed but not surprised that counterparts are cautious about public statements on Zimbabwe. Swedish Ambassador Sten Rylander provoked a furious reaction in state media when he talked about violence during a UN-led meeting between the donors and the GOZ. The preference in Harare is to wait and see, which means that donors will be on the defensive when the GOZ accuses the international community of hypocrisy for failing to respond enthusiastically to paper reforms.

MCCEE